551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (tne or tana). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551 602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551 173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head

1. See among others L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, pp. 119ff.

of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called kuludyu which lived in an underground village in a place called kuluba (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called Kónyo (literally, marriage) and Mbadun (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones," they said. "But no," laughingly answered the other two, "it is hyena excrement." And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

784 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo
783 than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's nyama and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally senānku and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is

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1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

to rid him of his victim's nyama, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's nyama will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's nyama may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then
[201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the dyanzani or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

/83/ Joking Relationship

602 608 A very important institution is also linked to the family name. It concerns the ties called "joking relationship," dyo benatye (literally, agreement between us), which is integrated with the general kinship relationships designated in the Mandingo country by the term senãnkuya. But family relationships in the strict sense, called sindyi benatye (literally, breast milk between us), are to be distinguished from dyo benatye which, on the contrary, involves the members of two families, or even of two different peoples.

Thus, a Koulibali is a Kéita's senãnku among the Bambara; Bozo and Dogon as well as Bozo and Somono are also senãnku (1). To the

1. Joking relationship called senãnkuya among the Bambara is termed măgu among the Dogon, dagana among the Bozo, etc. This important institution, which embraces all the tribes of the French Sudan, has already been the object of a number of studies. See especially M. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal Niger /The Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 206; H. Labouret, "La Parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship in West Africa/"; D. Paulme, Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship and Blood Alliance in West Africa/; R. Radcliffe-Brown, On Joking Relationships.

In the "Alliance cathartique /The Cathartic Alliance/," M. Griaule throws light on the Dogon-Bozo relations which are at the origin of the institution in the Sudan. This brings out the fundamental notion of the duality of beings and the principles that animate them. A Dogon and a Bozo are twins, each carrying a particle of the other in his body and soul. When he insults or purifies, he appeals to that part of himself in the other and the powers he communicates in this way come to the help of his partner.

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The latest investigations on this subject have brought to light the following facts: Dogon and Bozo have, respectively, eight seeds and eight fish in their collarbones and thus they realize the distribution of the heavenly sustenance (see p. 53). This latter is evidence of their spiritual integrity and any breaking of taboos results first in depriving the person of his seeds or his fish. The purpose of the institution is to enable the ally to intervene in order to reinstate the nourishing substance in the body of the guilty person.

It should be stated here that in instances in which they are described by the same term (senãnkuya), kin relationships, which also involve joking exchanges, must not be confused with relationships between families (more exactly between names) or between tribes.

Moreover, within this last group, several types of alliances can be observed: some involve exogamy (Dogon and Bozo: Bozo and Peul, etc...); others exclude the possibility of carrying out purification rites. It will therefore be necessary to examine as many cases as possible before establishing any rules for this type of alliance.

Mandé, a Koulibali and a Tangara, bound by a long and durable friendship, decided to seal it in a lasting way. They opened their veins and put a little blood from one wound into the other, thus realizing the alliance through this exchange. They next prepared a meal which they ate /84/ together while pronouncing their oaths never to spill each other's blood.

In this way the dyo benatye (1) was consecrated between them and

1. Because of this alliance, members of the Kouloubali family were authorized by the Tangara of the village of Barbé (region of Mopti) to settle in the village. The

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Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the senãnku. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The senãnku is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the senãnku will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The senãnku jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the daworo which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of

1. See p. 241.

marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

602 783 The senãnku is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (tne). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

602 783 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the [201] right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

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> say "master" or "mistress." One may even say that in ordinary usage fa and ba are equivalent to our "Monsieur" and "Madame," with all the shades of meaning these entail.

father by his children; husband by his wives; grandfather by all his descendants; and uncle by those who have claims on the family property.

The genitor, procreator, father is the wolo-fa, and all his descendants alike are called de in relation to him.

There is, properly speaking, no term meaning brother or sister, but one can say baden'-ma-ke or baden'-ma-moso. Children of the same father call each other koro (old man) or dua, duani (young), respectively, in order to indicate the eldest and the youngest and to designate agnate or uterine relationship. Strictly speaking, duani is the younger uterine brother.

There is no special term for nephew; brother's sons are de because they are under their uncle's authority, just as his own children are. Sister's sons do not belong to their mother's family, and they are de to their father's family.

Cousins, insofar as they are the issue of brothers, are also de in that they are all under the authority of the same fa, and since they consider themselves brothers, they call each other koro or duani, respectively.

601 There is a kind of cousin relationship between the children of a brother and a sister, with some precedence accorded
602 to the former.

A kind of kinship likewise exists between the children of two sisters.

In short, true kinship exists only between persons who are dependent on the same fa.

601 As for affinals, they are all covered by the single term biran', literally, "one with whom we are in agreement."

The women, moso-u, as co-wives, call one another sina-u. With respect to their children and the other children in

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

583 It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

584 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette for-
● 602 bids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583 184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as

1. For example, Dêssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have dyamu and tne in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special dyamu and particular tne. At first the new dyamu is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current fa who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective dyamu and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
626 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even